

## Good Stories for Children

By Walt McDougall



# CRUEL ALFRED PIERPONT MOONEY GETS A COSTLY LESSON

Duffix, the Mosquito, Avenged the Wrongs of a Tiny White Dog that Had Been Horribly Mistreated by This Bad Boy, Who Delighted in the Poor Animal's Suffering

ERE was a boy lived near me whose name was

Alfred Pierpont Mooney, and who was a very cruel boy, indeed. He would pull off the legs of files to torture them; tie cans on dogs' tails; stone cats and in every way make life a terror to every small creature which he could capture. The red did this was because he had in his brain some hiar deformity that made him enjoy the sight of suffering other boys, who are made properly, enjoy the happiss of their pets. If Alfred could make a dog howl he was appy for an hour, and he never neglected an opportunity to safict forture upon any small creature, no matter where he was One day he caught a tiny white dog that belonged to a little girl and hung it up by the tail to a fence, where it howled so pitifully that he was delighted, but its howls attracted the attention of an enormous mastiff asleep in a yard near by, and the big dog rushed out, seized Alfred by the leg and bit him savagely in so many places that he couldn't begin to point them out to the doctor who was called to repair damsges. He was put to bed, where he lay for days thinking how he could get even with the mastiff, and never thinking that he had been properly punished for cruelty at all.

Now, while he lay abed, and when his wounds were nearly well, so that he expected to be out next day, a mosquito bit him. Perhap4 that seems a very ordinary thing to happen to any one, but this was no ordinary mosquito. You may have eard, for it's now perfectly well known, that mosquitoes infect people with various diseases, such as malaria, elephantiasis and yellow fever, and it is suspected that they are the cause of many other fils that trouble us. That bothersome, striped-legged mosquito called Culex, and another cailed Anopheles, are known to be the ones to dread, and when you see a Culex coming for you, dodge him and run with all your might. Now, the one that bit Alfred was called the Duflix, and he was very large and very poisonous, and he landed n the boy when he was sound asleep and squirted into

him a whole lot of his special brand of poison, so that when he awoke there was a lump on his arm like a small egg that itched and smarted and burned so that he scratched it quite raw. He did not think much bout it, however, except to remark how big the lump was and how ore, but the kind of poison which Duflix injects into one has the wonful property of causing you to shrink and shrivel until you get to be as small as a toad or a mouse, no matter what the dootors give you; so ook out for old Duffix above all. Alfred got out to play that morning. and to make uim feel good his mother gave him a new sail-boat, which he took to a small pond near by and placed in the water. He stood on the shore watching it sail and as the wind took it out toward the end of the pond, where the water ran out through a tiny stream into the big river, he noticed that all of the snall shells, pebbles and sticks along the bank seemed much larger than he had ever seen them before. He did not know that already he was shrunk to the size of a doll; but that was what made everything seem so large to him. Then the wind brought is sailly to the above he was shrunk to the size of a doll; but that was his sallboat to the shore he ran around to it and stood beside it. Then he found that he was so small that he was not as tall as the mast of the ost and he was greatly alarmed, of course. He measured his height used a again, and was terrified, for he could not imagine what had appened to him. A dragonfly humming by starfled him, it was so ormous and so wicked looking, and a minnow swimming close to ore to see what was going on seemed like a shark to his excited vision. When the dragonfly whizzed by again Alfred ducked his head; and then he found that he was so small that he only stood a few inches above the

### THOUGHT HE WAS BEWITCHED

I have certainly been bewitched!" he exclaimed. "Something has happened to me that's made me small!"

Just then he heard a rushing scund, and a little white dog came rriedly out from the bushes and ran, barking, at him. He was so frightened that he sprang into the boat, and as he jumped he pushed her off from shore and she shot out on the smooth water. The dog barked. out did not follow, and the wind taking the sail, the boat soon was so far away that he seemed to think it was of no use even to bark, and he scampered back into the bushes.

Alfred steered the boat as it swept along the little stream leading to nd while it rocked perilously now and then, it sailed pr smoothly as a rule. Soon the stream broadened and was shaded by tall trees, and while gliding along beneath these something came hurt-ing down at Alfred—something all blue and green—with an awful shriek. that made him grovel in terror at the bottom of the boat. It was a kinglisher, but it seemed so big that it turned his blood cold. It missed head by an inch, and then darted back, having most likely mistaken the little ressel for a new kind of fish. Alfred began to wish himself on shore, and steered toward the grassy bank, as he had no wish for anther attack like that. The wind failed him here in the lee of the trees and soon he was carried far out on the bosom of the great river and was swiftly rushing along toward the sea. After awhile he became aware of a dark form in the water beneath, and, watching it closely. discovered that it was a great fish whose dull but savage eyes were fixed upon him with a deadly glare. He trembled, for, like all cruel boys, he was a coward at heart, and was glad when he found the boat approaching the river shore in response to his pressure on the rudder. en he reached the shore he jumped out so swiftly that the little boat floated away before he could secure her, and so he lost all chance to home the way he had come.

The grass was tall along shore and many queer sounds came from it pushed it aside and tried to get to the high bank. What things made these noises he could not guess, but they alarmed him exceedingly. Strange cluckings, scratchings, rustlings, grunts and even srows came from all sides, and, worst of all, it was growing quite dark, as the sun had set and only the shining surface of the river was really boy trembled with horror at the thought of staying re alone all night surrounded by strange and dangerous animals, for

he was now so small that he feared almost everything that was alive.

A dark hole opened before him when he came to the edge of the tall grass, and it seemed to him that it offered a safer place to spend the hight than out in the air, so he stepped in. It seemed to lead away in under the bank of gravel, and also seemed rather damp. As he stood the doorway, hesitating, the hole was entirely blocked up by the form

of a big muskrat, who said: "Hello! What do you want in my house?"

### ALFRED LOST HIS BOAT

am shipwrecked," replied Alfred. "That is, I've lost my boat, didn't want to stay out here all night. Can I sleep in your h. I s'pose so," replied the muskrat, rather gruffly. "I heard some tiling around as I sat at my other door, and came hurrying to see was. Thought it was a weasel."
Are you afraid of weasels?" asked Alfred.

I should say I was!" said the muskrat, wiggling his nose so skers wigwagged against the wall on both sides. "You should see me skip when he comes near! That's why I've two doors to my house,

It must be dreadfully damp and unhealthy." remarked Alfred, as a noticed the musty smell that came from the hole. th, if you think it's unhealthy you needn't enter, I'm sure," said

"I didn't invite you. Id surely catch cold if I slept down there," said Alfred; "but I am

No wonder," added the rat, "when the big owl and the wildcat are hoth roaming around here at the water's edge all night. One of them round surely get you, as you don't seem very swift on your feet." t

What shall I do?" asked Alfred, terrified. Well, there's a hole in the first tree yonder that's vacant since the Squazzle went away. You might take that for the night, but no one

what's a Squazzle?" asked Aifred. "I never heard of such a thing." He's an animal about as big as a kitten, perhaps; maybe a little r, but he's terrible, indeed. He is as fierce as a lion, as cumping as a fox and as strong as a bear, and he can see as well in the dark as he



### HE KNEW IT WAS THE SQUAZZLE.

can by day; he's much to be dreaded. Indeed, if he were not too large to get into my hole I'd fear him far more than I do the weasel or the hoot-owl."

"I-I guess I'll stay with you to-night," said Alfred, "If he's likely to

"All right; I'll fix you up a nice bed of moss and you'll sleep like a top, I'm sure, unless there should happen to be a freshet to drown you out.'

"Dear me!" sighed Alfred; "how many troubles you small animals "Well, I like that!" exclaimed the muskrat. "Small! Indeed! And

how big do you think you are, pray?" "I forgot that I'd shrunk to-day," replied Aifred. "I was most as

tail as this bank this morning." He related what had happened to him, and when he had finished the rat exclaimed:

"Why, you have been bitten by a Duffix, that's what has happened! He always has that effect upon whoever he stings."
"I am in an awful scrape, whatever it was," said Alfred. "You are, indeed, for you have no claws, no sharp teeth, you can't run fast, and you can't hear any better than a hoptoad. You are very badly provided to resist the attacks of pretty nearly everything that runs, crawls, flies or swims, I think. What a poor, pitiful thing a boy is, after all!" said the muskrat, reflectively, as he surveyed Alfred's

small figure. Alfred began to cry. "I wish I was home!" he sniffled. "I want my

### MUSKRAT CALLED THE FIREFLIES

along his tunnel, and led the way down into the hole far under the bank. When they had gone about ten feet the tunnel was so wet that Alfred saw it was of no use to go farther, and said so.

"It's the best I can do," said the muskrat. "We will show you a good, dry place," said the fireflies; "come with

They led him to a little sandy cave far up the bank where some soft oss had been gathered, and said:

"Here's where the fox had her nest last spring. It's a fine place, too." "It is," said Alfred, "but I do wish it had a front door."
"Yes," said the firefly. "Something may get you, I suppose, before

morning; but we will stay by and warn you if we see anything."

So Alfred laid himself down in the moss and tried to sleep, but it was impossible, and he watched the stars until the dim light came in the Nothing came to disturb him, and his courage revived, but just as the sun was almost up he had a great fright. A big groundhog came plunging over the bank chased by a dog, and almost ran over the boy. He vanished in the shadows of the thicket before the boy could even see what had frightened him. Then he heard the dog barking, and soon he heard him sniffling around above. He did not fear a dog, but when he thought how little he now was, he suddenly realized that the dog make a mouthful of him and he crawled deep into the cave. But the dog passed on, hot after the groundhog, and took no notice of Alfred. He breathed easier, but when he looked out the fireflies had gone. Then he climbed up the sandy bank and saw that great woods were beyond. How to pass through them he could not tell, and yet he must, for it was imp

to remain there. He saw some apple trees that bore fruit so enormous that

each seemed to him as big as the biggest watermelon does to you, and when he got heneath the trees he found some of the apples on the ground, from which he cut, with his little knife, enough to make a breakfast. While he was eating he saw a big animal come hurrying down a nearby tree with much angry chattering. His fear prevented him seeing at first that it was a squirrel, but when he saw the great bushy tall he felt relieved. The squirrel saw him in a moment, and ran to him. It seized him by the arm with its teeth and while it didn't actually bite him, it hurt pretty bad, and he knew how it felt to be tor-tured, let me tell you. Soon another came running and joined its mate.

### THEY PLAN THE REVENGE

"What shall we do with him?" it asked. "Shall we bite him all to "No; let's carry him to the top of the tree and then drop him. That

They were about to do this when the dog, who had followed the woodchuck, or groundhog, to his hole and given up the chase, happened to return, and he saw the squirrels. He made one jump for them, and it was all they could do to hustle up the tree in time to escape him. He came back to Alfred and looked at him in amazement

"Bless me!" he cried. "It's really a boy, but what a tiny one! What's

Alfred told him that he had been bitten by a Duflix and shrunk "Never heard of such a thing!" said the dog. "I'm glad it didn't happen to me, I'm sure." He said he would show the boy the way home, and together they started through the woods, but it was very hard for him, for the dog chased off to investigate each little noise he heard and sometimes he didn't some back for the longest time imaginable. Then Alfred would sit in the grass or on a pebble and, too, he would hear then the awfulest noises that seemed to him just the kind of sounds the Squazzle would make, so that he was afraid to move, but sat and stared into the darkened woods with eyes like a bug's. When the dog came back he would laugh and assure the boy that there was nothing worse than a weasel or a woodchuck in all the woods. Once, while he was absent looking into a peculiar smell that he had scented from afar, Alfred heard a whirr of wings and a big bevy of quail came and alighted

When they saw him they were alarmed and nervous, but just then the dog came trotting back toward them, and instantly all stood as if petrified. Their bright eyes were fixed upon the approaching dog with gleaming intentness, but not a feather moved as the flock crouched flat to the ground. It seemed so funny to Alfred that they didn't instantly fly away, but somehow their fear of the dog held them motionless until . he came near. He suddenly caught the scent of the birds and stopped, for he was a setter dog, whose name was Dan; and he could smell a quall many yards away. He stiffened and his tall went out as straight as a cane as he pointed his sharp nose toward the birds, while his brown eyes seemed to shoot out sparks. Then he began to tremble with eagerness and took one step forward. Instantly there was a mighty whire that made Alfred's heart jump and away shot the whole flock, like a lot of bullets. Dan glanced about him and, remembering that his master was far away, galloped after them, but had his master been there he would never have dared to do such a thing. Alfred was left alone once more. He sat there for a few minutes, when two rabbits crept cauIt is Also Related How the Savage Squazzle Met a Violent Death in a Struggle With Dan, the Faithful Setter Dog, Who Attacked the Monster Without a Sign of Fear

tiously out of a clump of grass and, with timid looks all around, began to nibble at some tender roots.

"I saw a trap over yonder," said one of them, "and it had the leveliest sweet apple in it! I was tempted to try to get it." "Your greediness will finish you yet, if you are not careful," said the other. "I don't look at them at all, and that's how

"It's an awful temptation," sighed the other. "I do wish men would not place them in our way. Turnips are bad enough,

but it's awful to have to refuse an apple "It is, I confess, but when I think that's how I lost both

my father and mother the sight of an apple in a trap makes Just then they saw Alfred and began to tremble all over.

"I will not hurt you," said the boy, who by this time had begun to realize how all these small animals must live in a constant state of extreme terror and apprehension, and also to regret that he had ever been cruel to any of them. "I am only a boy," he continued.

"Yes, but boys will grow into men with guns and hurt us," said one rabbit, as he eyed Alfred. "But you're the smallest boy I ever saw! What are you doing here?"

"I am lost." said Alfred. "Well, we can show you the way out of the woods," began

one of the timid creatures. "but we can't go far with you-" "Thank you," replied the boy, "but I am waiting here for a dog, a friend of mine, who-"

That was all the rabbits heard, for at the mention of a dog they both gave a start, wiggled their tails and in a jiffy had darted into the deepwoods. Alfred had to laugh, and when Dan returned he told him about it.

"I am sorry you didn't keep them here," said Dan. "It's guite a while since I chased a rabbit, and I would have enjoyed it, although, try as I may, I can never catch one."

"I am glad you had no chance, for the poor things are frightened enough as it is." "They are scary things," said Dan. "Once, though, one of

them, a mother with young, made a dash for me-like a lion." "What did you do?" asked Alfred.

Why, I ran away, of course. Did you ever see a dog that wouldn't

run if anything went for him suddenly?" Then they went on and for a time Dan stayed by the boy dutifully, resisting several inducements to wander, but when they were almost through the dense woods he had to see where a big partridge had gone and left Alfred again to himself. As he sat on a fallen branch, looking about him, his eyes fell upon the trap mentioned by the rabbits. It had an apple upon a piece of wood in the centre of a box, which was held up by three other pieces of wood, so that if the apple was touched ever so by three other pieces of wood, so that it the apple was duched even agently down would come the box and catch whatever touched the tempting apple. Alfred walked around the trap examining it, for he had never seen one before, and wondering how any animal could be foolish enough to walk into such a thing, when a sudden noise behind him caused him to jump and turn around in affright. There, a few feet away, stood and animal the like of which he had never seen, even in picture books, and which he felt must be the terrible and much-dreaded Squazzle. Al-though only a foot in height, it was, of course, simply enormous in his eyes, and so feroclous in appearance that he felt his hair rise and his flesh chill. Its head was covered with long hair of a brilliant blue color, through which its eyes projected like a lobster's and moved to and fro like the tentacles of a cuttlefish. Its ears also stuck far up and spread out on their tips somewhat like a calla lily. It had eight legs, all armed with long, white, curved claws, and its body, long, like a lizard's, was scaly, but marked with a well-defined plaid pattern. It was a horrible-looking creature and it teetered on the tips of its eight toes as if about to spring upon Alfred ever moment. A cold perspiration broke out upon him, but he looked into the red eyes of the Squazzle firmly, in the hope and polar bears. His gaze did seem to have some slight effect upon the beast, for he appeared to hesitate, and while he stood poised Alfred suddenly sprang up and darted away blindly into the forest, not even looking to see where he was running. The Squazzle, of course, rushed after him. Alfred realized in an instant that he could not hope to distance an animal with eight legs, and he turned aside around a clump of turned at all, and before the animal could get to him he darted un the trap, struck the suspended apple a quick blow and down came the box instantly. He was as safe as if at home, for the box was far too big for any animal smaller than a bear to overturn.

### THE SQUAZZLE IN A FURY

The infuriated and disappointed Squazzle banged against the box in a ed and scratched it wildly and yelled like a wild tiger but he couldn't budge it an inch, while Alfred sat still and chuckled on the inside. Round and round the Squazzle flew, tearing up the ground, spitting and howling and making such a furious outcry that he never heard Dan coming sweeping through the woods in wild leaps to see what was going on. Dan saw the animal in a moment and made jump at him, and then the Squazzie saw him, when it was too late. He uttered a frightened squeal and turned to leave, but Dan took him behind the lily-like ears, and it was all up with the Squazzle. Dan tossed fell into those great jaws again, when there was a crack, another squeal, and then the dreadful Squazzle was limp and dead. Dan shook him one soon discovered where Alfred was. Alfred said:

"Give the box a good bump and turn it over, Dan."

Dan bumped the trap several times, but somehow it did not overturn as easily as Alfred had expected, but he persisted for a long time.

Finally he ceased and began to bark with all his might, ending each bark with a long and melancholy how! that was calculated to call

mebody in that direction pretty soon, as he knew very well.

And it did. It was not long before Dan saw a boy coming field toward the woods, and he barked louder. When the boy came Dan said to Alfred: "Here comes a boy. I won't talk to him, for I don't want people to know that dogs can talk, so you do some hollering now." Alfred raised his voice in loud shouts, and, although he could not make much noise, the boy heard the faint call, and came to the tran. which happened to be his own. He looked at it carefully, and again

"Where on earth are you?" asked the boy.

"In the trap," replied Alfred, "Turn it over and let me out."
"Ah, you're foolin'," said the boy, and Alfred had to ask twice before the astounded country lad would turn over his trap. When he saw the diminutive boy within he opened his eyes in astonishment and said: "Geewhillikins! It's a .airy!"

### HE TOLD HOW IT HAPPENED

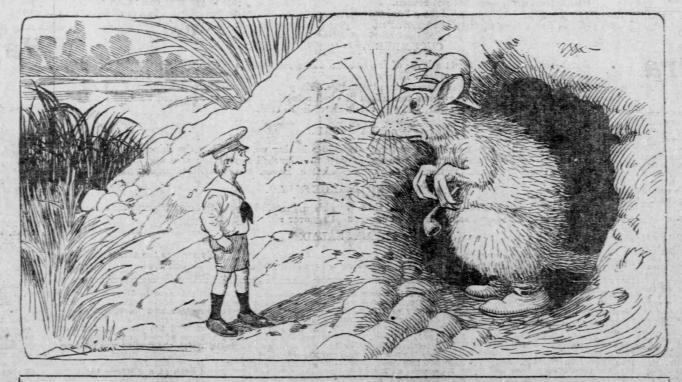
"No. I'm no fairy." shouted Alfred as loud as he could. "I'm a boy "No. I'm no fairy," should a lifted as found as ne cound. I'm a boy that's been bitten by the Deflix, that's all, and I've shrunk!"

He stepped out and walked around, while the other boy stared. Then Alfred told how it had happened, much to the boy's wonder. Dan never said a word; he only sat there and looked very wise, indeed. Alfred did not spare himself, but told how cruel he had always been to animals, and then adjed that he had learned from his experience how little things can suffer, even if merely from fright. He was still talking when old Dr. Piligarlic came along, and when he saw Alfred he put on his glasses and examined him very carefully, after which he announced that it was very probable that he would get big again some time when the

poison of the Duffix's sting had passed out of his system.

He took the little lad home to his parents, who were filled with alarm at the awful change, all but his little sister, who wanted to play with him like a doll. After a few days the doctor's prediction came true. Alfred suddenly began to grow larger, and in a month was even a bigger bey than before, but he never forgot what he had learned, nor ceased to feel a deep sympathy for everything that was small and helpless.

And after that you may believe that all of the windows in the Mooney mansion were mighty well protected by the very strongest mos-quito netting, while the Squazzle, beautifully stuffed and mounted on a ahogany board by a taxidermist, still stands on the parlor mantel, where, if you wish, you may see it at any time, if you know the Mooney



AT THE MUSKRAT'S DOOR